

REGIONAL DISPARITIES IN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT : THE KENYAN EXPERIENCE

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE UNIVERSITY OF POONA

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN ECONOMICS

GOKHALE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS  
PUNE-411 004

AUGUST 1985

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Those who have treated of the sciences have been empirics or dogmatical. The former like ants only heap up and use their store, the latter like spiders spin out their own webs. The bee - a mean between both extracts matter from flowers of the garden and the field but works and fashions it by its own efforts."

- Francis Bacon

While the desire to know is wide, it is seldom strong enough to overcome the more powerful organic need and few indeed possess both the liking and ability to face the arduous difficulties of scientific method. The desire to know is not often strong enough to sustain critical enquiry. People are generally interested in the results and not in the technical methods whereby these results and their truth always is tested and verified. Many readers too, are interested only in the finished product not the raw materials.

Throughout my stay at Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE), I have had time to ponder, reflect and subject myself to self examination. As a consequence, I have been able to discover enough to know how little I know. A truly sincere and honest person must learn to recognize his own limitations. He has to be brave enough to see through everything - including himself. He must learn to be articulate more so if he is an alien.

When he finds himself handicapped by the inability to communicate with his peers, it is upon his task to readjust and to withdraw himself to learning by observation, listening, registering and digesting whatever he gathers by way of his sensory reflexes. These in turn help him to modify his social attitudes. Indeed, it is the social attitude of an investigator, rather than his method of analysis, which will either

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distort or enlighten his view of the real world, and may either limit or widen both the explanatory value and predictability of his proposed study.

I think this unique phenomenon is wholly Indian. Indeed, if there is truly any gift that a year's stay in India has given me and which I must carry back with me to cherish throughout my life, that gift is inherent in my discovery of the Gandhian dictum "Simple living, keen observation and clear thinking". Reflection is, no doubt, the beginning of knowledge.

This study began as an attempt to write a critical review of the literature pertaining to the growth centre/growth pole theory and to determine its relevance and irrelevance to the Kenyan development priorities. I must admit how at first I became imbued with enthusiasm and enormous ambition under the illusion that the going would be easy. I was very wrong.

Three months of combined research and writing is too short a time for one to be able to produce work of quality. Only after I began the work did it become apparent to me that in empirical investigation, what the facts are must be determined by inquiry and cannot be otherwise so that foolish opinions and value judgements are always readily eliminated by the power of facts. No matter how much one may want to say, it is virtually impossible to say anything that lacks the support of facts.

Facts too need organization. To gather facts in the course of an investigation without knowing what to do with them is tantamount to accumulating building materials without building a house. Moreover, while a research in itself is a process that requires a skilled technique, no one has been able to know as yet of a way by which to supply at once creative ability to those who lack such techniques. As a consequence, a thesis supervisor must endure the suffering and indignation of perpetually repeating the same ideas over and over again to his

student before the latter is capable of grasping the subject matter. Such suffering became quite acute when time limit prevails and the project big.

I have also been taken aback to discover that in spite of many of my shortcomings I came to find in a man of the calibre of my guide who never hesitates to comfort his student and who has been most willing to always show that the difficulties a research student is apt to face are quite normal experiences. Early in time, he was able to bring to my awareness that none of the precautions of scientific method can prevent a new researcher from being amateurish. Hence no beginner in scientific investigation will know ahead of time what path to follow reaching his goal notwithstanding.

This latter burden must rest with the guide so that when Rabindranath Tagore equates schooling with a factory where everyone is a worker-participant, the paradox of education unpackages itself quite clearly. He says: "What we call school in this country is really a factory and the teachers are part of it." That is, teachers must labour along with their students and often times even more than the latter.

This no doubt, is what has happened between me and my mentor, Professor V.M. Dandekar. My greatest gratitude goes to him for having been able to show concern to my work in spite of his involvement in various academic and professional responsibilities. I must in particular thank him for having been instrumental in helping me narrow my topic from a broader conceptualization of growth pole theory down to the basic topic of "Regional Disparities in Economic Development".

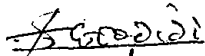
Numerous people have rendered great assistance to me in the course of this endeavour and it is not possible to thank them individually. My obligation to them is great. It is a pleasure, however, to acknowledge the stimulus I have received from Professor N. Rath, the Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, without whom I would have prematurely

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abandoned my tenure way back in February. My thanks go also to Mzee V.N. Inamdar who has very ably assisted me by organizing a great deal of tables and statistical material in accordance with the thesis format. The latter happens to be my typist and his prompt typing has helped me overcome unnecessary delay.

In all, however, the memory of my long time friend Obuya Ogendo is always with me.

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August 1985

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## PREFACE

This is a country study. Our concern is with regional disparities in economic development of Kenya. The study attempts to delineate the trends of regional inequalities among Kenya's eight regions.\* This is done by examining the available data since independence. Hence, the study covers a twenty year period (1963-1983). Five variables have been chosen for this analysis. These are land, agriculture, urbanization, industrial production and social services i.e. education and health.

Chapter I is introductory in that it presents a general geographical overview of Kenya. This includes a discussion of the physical features such as climate, vegetation and topography, and how the latter three have influenced the country's demographic distributions.

Chapter II analyses the regions of Kenya i.e. how they were formed, the people inhabiting them, their distribution and densities. The chapter also examines the types of land available in terms of its quality classification and how such lands are distributed regionally.

Land distribution on the basis of tenure is discussed in Chapter III. Three systems of tenure are examined. These

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\* The terms "regions" and Provinces are used interchangeably throughout the study.

are government lands, freehold lands and trust lands. Our purpose here, is mainly to try to show how these three categories came to evolve and the economic impact these systems of tenure may have had on the lives of the Kenyan people. Chapter III also discusses the process of land reforms in Kenya. This is done at two levels, namely, land registration and land settlement schemes.

In Chapter IV, we extend our discussion of land to include land utilization as a prelude to the pattern of agriculture in Kenya. This is done sequentially by first analysing small farm production. Then, we move to discuss large-farm production before combining small and large-farms together. Thereafter, we juxtapose livestock production on the latter two in order to present a general pattern of the agricultural sector as a whole.

Urbanization is discussed in Chapter V. Our approach in this section is basically normative. We have avoided indulging in unnecessary polemics about the development of urban primacy and instead have only given the data to show that urbanization is accelerating rapidly in Kenya. But by doing so, the idea has been to show the dwindling nature of traditional societies as a result of demographic adjustments caused by rural-urban population drift.

The industrial sector is discussed in Chapter VI where we examine the development policies from the first to the fourth Plans. Our aim in this chapter is basically to reveal

the nature of the Kenya government's industrial location policies. In addition, this is considered necessary as a prelude to explaining the nature of inequality in industrial resource endowments in the country.

The provision of social services is analysed in Chapter VII. This is done in two categories, namely education and health. Education is analysed in relation to primary, secondary, technical and teacher training enrolments, both at the national and regional levels. The section also analyses the break-up of trained and untrained teachers and their countrywide distribution. Health is discussed in relation to the problems of inadequacy of health staff at the national and regional levels, as well as health institutions and hospitals facilities (beds and cots) available in the country.

The last chapter draws conclusions from the foregoing.